

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SPM-01 EB-11 AGR-20 AID-20 IGA-02 SS-15

L-03 H-02 NSC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03

RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 CIEP-02

STR-08 RSR-01 /138 W

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R 101120 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3070

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: EAID, CB, TH

SUBJ: THAI RICE FOR CAMBODIA

REF: PHNOM PENH 4441

SUMMARY: EMBASSY DOUBTS THAT DIRECT USG- RTG CONTRACT FOR PURCHASE THAI RICE FOR CAMBODIA WOULD RESULT IN RTG WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE FIRM SHIPPING SCHEDULE FOR FUTURE SHIPMENTS. RTG HAS AGAIN INDICATED WILLINGNESS CONSIDER ADDITIONAL TRANCHES ON INDIVIDUALLY NEGOTIATED BASIS. PRICES MIGHT BE HIGHER FOR FUTURE SALES. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY IS NOT SANGUINE THAT IF USG WERE TO CONTRACT DIRECTLY WITH RTG FOR PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL RICE FOR CAMBODIA, AS SUGGESTED REFTTEL, RTG WOULD BE WILLING PROVIDE FIRM SHIPPING SCHEDULE FOR TRANCHES OVER NEXT FEW MONTHS. ALTHOUGH EMBASSY HAS NOT APPROACHED RTG IN TERMS OF SUCH DIRECT CONTRACT WITH USG, EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE MADE MANY APPROACHES IN PAST SEVERAL MONTHS TO RTG OFFICIALS AT VARIOUS LEVELS IN EFFORTS OBTAIN COMMITMENTS ON BEHALF GKR. RTG RESPONSE HAS CONSIS-  
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TENTLY BEEN THAT WHILE THEY WOULD DO THEIR BEST, THEY WERE UNWILLING OR UNABLE COMMIT THEMSELVES IN ADVANCE TO MORE THAN ONE INDIVIDUALLY NEGOTIATED SALE AT A TIME, BECAUSE OF UNCERTAIN SITUATION REGARDING RICE SUPPLY. THEY HAVE NEVER RULED OUT, HOWEVER, THE POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATING ADDITIONAL SALES ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS.

2. THIS POLICY WAS AGAIN VOICED BY RTG LAST WEEK WHEN EMBASSY'S AGATT ACCOMPANIED MR. ROBERT BIEBER, FAS WASHINGTON, AND MET WITH MR. VICHARN NIVATVONGS, UNDER SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE. DURING THIS MEETING MR. BIEBER ASKED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF THAILAND SUPPLYING 40,000 TONS OF RICE TO CAMBODIA. MR. VICHARN SAID THAILAND WAS NOT IN A POSITION TO SIGN A CONTRACT FOR 40,000 TONS OF RICE. HOWEVER, HE DID SAY HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER ADDITIONAL 5,000 TON CONTRACTS AND WOULD TRY TO FURNISH AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE OF THE 40,000 TONS REQUESTED. MR. VICHARN INDICATED THAT HIS MINISTRY SHOULD BE APPROACHED FOR ANOTHER 5,000 TONS AS SOON AS THE PRESENT 5,000 TONS IS SHIPPED.

3. FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH THE UNDER SECRETARY, MR. BIEBER AND THE AGATT MET WITH MR. SUTHEE NATVARATAT, DIRECTOR GENERAL, FOREIGN TRADE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE. MR. SUTHEE GAVE THE SAME REPLIES TO THE INQUIRY CONCERNING A CONTRACT FOR 40,000 TONS OF RICE AS HAD MR. VICHARN. HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THAILAND'S DESIRE TO HELP CAMBODIA BUT BECAUSE OF SHORT RICE SUPPLY THE RTG IS THINKING ONLY IN TERMS OF 5,000 TON SHIPMENTS. MR. SUTHEE INDICATED THAT THE SECOND RICE CROP IS NOT EXPECTED TO BE AS LARGE AS FORECAST; THEREFORE THE RTG IS RELUCTANT TO SIGN ANY LARGE RICE CONTRACTS.

4. REASONS GIVEN FOR THIS POLICY HAS BEEN CONCERN ABOUT EFFECT AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF A LARGE- VOLUME SALE MIGHT HAVE ON DOMESTIC PRICES, AS WELL AS INDEFINITENESS OF QUANTITIES AVAILABLE FROM SECOND CROP. IN FACT, TODAY'S LOCAL PRESS CARRIED REPORTED STATEMENT BY COMMERCE MINISTER PRASIT KANCHANAWAT THAT FREEZE ON RICE EXPORTS WILL BE MAINTAINED UNTIL IT IS CERTAIN THAT DOMESTIC PRICES COME DOWN, THAT IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHEN EXPORT RESTRICTIONS WILL BE LIFTED.

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 10 MAY 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** garlanwa  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** n/a  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Film Number:** n/a  
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**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 73 PHNOM PENH 4441  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** garlanwa  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 20 NOV 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <20-Nov-2001 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <14-Dec-2001 by garlanwa>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 980112  
**Subject:** THAI RICE FOR CAMBODIA  
**TAGS:** EAID, CB, TH  
**To:** EA  
PHNOM PENH  
SECSTATE WASHDC  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005